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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JESUS.

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THE disposition, so manifest in modern historians of the life of Jesus, to scrutinize our records of his teaching for indirect evidence of his unknown personal history, and most of all to search diligently for any gleam of reflected light cast back into that all-important period when his Messianic consciousness was ripening toward its bloom, is one which commends itself equally from the religious and scientific point of view. If conducted with due reverence, no research can be so rich in helpful return to the devout spirit. If conducted with due regard to the canons of logic and evidence, no critical inquiry can be more reasonably hopeful of illuminating results in the highest sphere of history. For if, as all experience teaches, a living experience of truth be the indispensable condition of power and effectiveness in setting it forth, we must account for the unique power and vitality of the sayings of Jesus by the fact that he speaks out of the fullness of the deepest experience of a living, growing, struggling human spirit.¹ His living truths are his own flesh and blood, born, like every truth we can call really our own, in the birth-throes of mental and spiritual wrestling. Even without the express testimony of the evangelist to the fact of Jesus' mental and spiritual growth (Luke 2:52), we might infer from the intensity and soul-felt ardor of many a recorded utterance that here, if ever, Lowell's words find worthy application:

Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnace'd
In the blast of a soul that has struggled in earnest.

The gospel record is not wanting in instances of fiery ordeals out of which the Son of Man comes forth transfigured and glorified, from the temptations of the wilderness to the agony of Gethsemane. Nor is it lacking either, for those whose gaze is

¹ Cf. Luke 6:45.

bent on that which must lie beneath the surface, in sayings which still glow with the heat of the soul-conflict out of which they issue. On the morrow after that first thrilling sabbath in Capernaum, when the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue had startled the whole city into the consciousness of the prophet in their midst, with his endowment of mighty powers of healing, and had brought them by thousands to Peter's door, we find Jesus settling—so wisely—the first great question of his public ministry: whether to follow this tempting path of the healer, the miracle worker, thronged everywhere by wondering, exultant crowds; or to deny himself, save on special occasion, to the multitudes which sought relief for their physical ailments. It was in the solitude of prayer in the gray twilight outside the city that this decision was reached. "In the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." The answer to the exultant urgency of "Simon and them that were with him" with their "All are seeking thee"—the quiet, inexorable: "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is the end for which I came forth"—had come to him while they were still dreaming of the triumphs of the sabbath past and the greater wonders that should come on the morrow.²

But there are outward experiences of Jesus, as well as these lonely vigils and nights of prayer in the wilderness or on the mountain top, which we cannot but feel are reflected in his teaching. One incident in particular, which the gospels naturally pass over with the lightest touch candor would permit, was of a character to cut more nearly to the quick than any mere privation or suffering at the hands of foes. It was not long after the beginning of Jesus' career as a public preacher in Galilee that he sat teaching a great throng in Peter's house in Capernaum. Then came his mother and his brethren, and standing without sent word to ask him to come forth to them, "desiring to lay hold on him; for they said, he is beside himself." The alternative was to consent to an interruption of his ministry by force—an interruption which, in spite of the care manifestly taken to

² Mark 1:32-38.

avoid a scene, must be both humiliating and destructive of his influence; or else a severing of the ties of home and kindred. Can we imagine any other decision than that which follows? "He answered: 'Who is my mother and my brethren?' And looking round on them which sat round about him he said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'"³ It was a renunciation of earthly kindred for such as God might give him in their place. But he surely did not deny himself to his mother and his brethren without a pang. Nor can we think this costliest earthly sacrifice of his own was absent from his mind when he turned to the multitudes ready with a light heart to follow him to Jerusalem, and said: "If any man cometh unto me and doth not hate his own father and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."⁴ Still more certainly must we think of Jesus' own experience as the ground for his confident assurance to those who claimed to have left all and followed him: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."⁵

It would not be difficult to find in other sayings probable traces of Jesus' feeling of homelessness, mitigated only by the limitless hospitality of strangers who heard the word of God and did it.⁶ Even more instructive would it be if we knew the wrestlings of soul out of which come to us his sweeping declarations concerning the omnipotence of faith, the absolute, unlimited resources of prayer. In such things his words have

³ Mark 3: 20, 21, 31-35.

⁴ Luke 14: 26.

⁵ Mark 10: 29, 30. Is there significance in the order "home, brethren, sisters, mother" in both verses, and the entire omission of "father" in vs. 30? Cf. 6: 3.

⁶ Cf. Matt. 8: 20 = Luke 9: 58, and Matt. 19: 12, where celibacy undertaken "for the kingdom of heaven's sake" may be thought of in connection with others besides John the Baptist.

the ring, not merely of one who knows, but of one who knows how he knows and has won his pearl of truth at great price.

Such side-lights upon the inner history of Jesus, inferred from occasional sayings, are all too little appreciated. But we have in mind for our present consideration what fairly deserves to be called the "autobiography" of Jesus, as being a direct narrative of his own inner experience, and covering the whole significance of his Messianic career. Unless the drift of all our best modern criticism be wrong, and the united judgment of such scholars as B. Weiss, Wendt, and Beyschlag completely at fault, the gospels preserve to us in their oldest elements not merely an allusion by Jesus to his own inner history—this we certainly have in Mark 3:27—but a positive autobiographic discourse from Jesus' own lips, veiled and symbolical in form, as we might expect from the nature of the subject, but rich as one of the parables themselves in meaning. We have, in short, not merely the allusion to the fact, but Jesus' own account of it in the story of the temptation, that struggle in which the Son of Man had proved himself able to enter into the house of the strong man armed, the Prince of this world, bind him, and set his bondslaves free. If this be so, Jesus himself has placed in our hands the key to his Messianic consciousness—a master-key to the deepest problems of the New Testament.

It is true that in proposing the exploitation of the story of the baptism and temptation as the true storehouse of knowledge for an understanding of Jesus' self-consciousness, we are advancing nothing new. Doubtless we can add little to the profound chapter of Beyschlag entitled "The Messianic Call."⁷ Here the fundamental truth is grasped with unerring precision: the story of the vision at Jordan and the temptation in the wilderness are rightly made "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Christ the Son of God" because they set forth (1) how Jesus came to believe himself the Messiah; (2) how he framed his conception of the Messiah of God by rejecting the false type of Messiahship according to men.⁸ In two respects, however, there

⁷ *Leben Jesu*, 1885, Vol. I, pp. 209-43.

⁸ We owe much to the careful and sympathetic study of B. Weiss, whose *Leben*

may be seen to be reason for reconsideration of the narrative; first, for a better understanding of its historical setting; second, for a more consistent view of the subject Jesus seems to be treating in it, viz., the origin of his Messianic self-consciousness.

Unfortunately it is not allowable even today to take the story of the baptismal vision and the temptation in the symbolic sense which one of Jesus' intimate hearers might naturally give it, until at least a part of the work already well done by such scholars as those above referred to is done over again. At the utmost the current modern conception of the baptismal vision has reached the point of view of Theodoret: *ὁπτασία ἦν, οὐ φύσις, τὸ φαινόμενον, — οὐ φύσις ἦν τὸ δεικνύμενον, ἀλλὰ πνευματικὴ θεωρία*. It has barely concluded that the heavens which split in twain are not a visible and tangible dome, floor of the dwelling of God, and that it is better with the oriental source (and

Jesus must be read side by side with Beyschlag's; but in this instance it must be apparent to the careful reader that Beyschlag is right in recognizing the moment of the baptismal vision as that in which, for the first time, and with overwhelming force, the conviction burst upon Jesus of his personal call to the Messiahship. The attempt of Weiss to carry back this conviction to some unknown time in Jesus' boyhood, and to regard the baptismal vision as a mere corroboration of a conviction reached by slow degrees in quiet ripening of thoughtful conviction; or as the mere divine summons to begin his work—in reality the imprisonment of John fulfilled this office—takes away the most vital significance of both narratives. The baptismal vision is then no longer the calling *from God*, without which no amount of conscious sinlessness or sense of unique fellowship with God would have permitted Jesus to harbor for a moment the thought of his personal Messiahship, or to welcome the belief of others. Antedating thus the Messianic consciousness makes Jesus do precisely what he would certainly not have done, and what Heb. 5:5 expressly says he did not—"glorify himself to be made a high priest." And not only so, but it takes away all psychological significance from the temptation. If Jesus had long since determined his Messianic calling in his own mind, why this overwhelming revulsion of feeling? Why the necessity for repudiating a host of unworthy conceptions of the Messiahship? On the contrary, the very story of the baptismal vision itself appears to us the absolute contradiction of Weiss' extraordinary dictum (p. 281): "Er [Jesus] wusste von keinem Moment, wo geschichtlich die Erwählung Gottes sich an ihm vollzogen hatte, wo die Liebe Gottes sich ihm zugewandt." If there be any force whatever in the striking aorist *εὐδόκησα*, it is precisely this "historical moment" to which it points. This historical moment, however, in which Jesus became aware that the choice of God had fallen upon him as "the Beloved" of Isa. 42:1-4, does not, of course, exclude such unconscious preparation on his part as the early choice of celibacy "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," Matt. 19:12.

Mark?) to take in a subjective sense the description: "And straightway, coming up out of the water, *he* saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, *Thou* art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased,"⁹ rather than with Luke, the matter-of-fact Gentile and occidental, to understand an outward phenomenon: "the heaven *was opened*, and the holy Ghost *descended in a bodily form*, as a dove upon him."¹⁰ Current interpretation has no inkling as yet of the important fact that the preaching and teaching of Jesus and the apostles was "of Jews, to Jews, among Jews," to whom the vision, the voice from heaven (the *בן קל* of the Talmud), the personification of the evil Power as "Satan," and of the agencies of God as "angels," were stereotyped forms of thought, current symbols too familiar to need explanation, symbols which to Gentiles like Luke, and to a Gentile church of the second generation, are already beginning to take on a concrete form and so becoming unintelligible.

So in regard to the temptation; the utmost we may be permitted to assume is that the crudely literal interpretation of the mediæval theology is on the wane. Men have at last decided not to think of the tempter in the wilderness as a visible devil, nor of the exceeding high mountain from whence are to be seen "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" as an actual mountain, nor of the taking of Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple in company of Satan as an actual bodily carrying off by the devil. It is too difficult to form the mental conception of a personal Satan, a mountain of the character described, a bodily presence (for how else could it be a trial to cast oneself down?) in company with Satan on the *πτερύγιον* of the temple, before all Israel assembled in the temple court (else what use in the miracle?), which should yet leave no trace in the memory of the people. We should like to believe that another reflection may also have contributed to the downfall of the old literal view, viz., that it is unworthy our thought of the Redeemer to conceive him as liable willingly or unwillingly to be rapt away

⁹ Mark 1:10, 11.

¹⁰ Luke 3:21, 22.

by Satan, and still more unworthy to think of him as actually tempted by such bare-faced iniquity and folly.¹¹

But how, then, should we account for the dominance of the vision theory, which in our day has come to take the place of the mediæval crudity, and which regards Jesus as having been exposed to just these temptations in just these forms; only not in the body, but in some trance, or ecstatic, abnormal condition? Such a theory has surely no great respect for either his physical, mental, or moral constitution. It is just as unnatural as its predecessor, just as much out of relation to psychological laws as the former to physical, and it certainly has no support whatever in the text, which knows of no trance or vision either here or elsewhere in the life of Jesus, though the New Testament writers on occasion are not chary of visions.¹²

Rather than suppose that such visions could spontaneously arise in the soul of Jesus, or on the other hand be sent upon him for no apparent reason by God, it were surely better to accept the mythological interpretation of Holtzmann *et al.*: the temptations are the attempt of a Christian of the second generation to fill up the vacant "forty days" of Mark 1:13 on the basis of Israel's temptations in the wilderness, or (Pfleiderer) on the basis of the tempting demands made upon Jesus during his public career.

¹¹ We willingly recognize that the order of Luke is the most infelicitous of all his attempts to restore that lost attribute of the early gospel sources (Luke 1:3; cf. the Papias fragment). Matthew's order is certainly more original in placing the temptation in which Satan reveals his identity last; for how could Jesus withhold his final *ἵνα γε σαρὰν* and submit to further solicitation, after his companion's identity was known? Luke, the occidental literalist, has doubtless put the temptation at the temple last from geographical considerations. But, even with the order of Matthew, can the Son of God be "tempted" to worship the devil? Were a loaf of bread, an Icarus flight like that of Simon Magus (*Constit. Apost.*, ii, 14; vi, 9) before the gaping multitude in the temple court, and "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," *inducements* to the mind of Jesus? The mediæval theory in its purity could avoid this difficulty by attributing very childish stupidity to the devil—which it was always ready enough to do. But what shall we say to its modern successor, the so-called vision theory (see above), which suggests that *these* were the types of delusive enticement which spontaneously sprang up in the pure and spiritual mind of Jesus, or were infused there by some supernatural power?

¹² The rationalistic explanations: an emissary of the Sanhedrim, or other human tempter, are hardly worth refuting.

But there are greater objections to the mythical theory than the lack of adequate motive in the Jewish Messianic expectations or in the luxuriant ideas of the early church (Beyschlag), objections greater than the implied necessity for surrendering the whole story of the wilderness sojourn as unhistorical (Weiss). One need only ask: (1) How far back toward the origins of the synoptic tradition must a narrative be dated which is presupposed by Mark 1:13, and which Matthew and Luke have taken in almost identical form from a common source? (2) What chance of acceptance in the church at that period—certainly within the lifetime of eyewitnesses—would a *fictitious* narrative have, which dealt with *such* a subject in so extraordinary a way? A candid answer will show that on purely historico-critical grounds the mythical theory is untenable. On the contrary, the very boldness of its subject, the very singularity of its form, so characteristically and unmistakably Jewish, finally the profound truthfulness of its representation of the mind of Christ—unless we wholly mistake its meaning—are proofs of its derivation from the earliest and highest of all authorities.

On the other hand it would be useless to deny that there are also objections to the theory of an autobiographic discourse—objections thus far unsolved. Only, so far as known to the present writer, these objections are all such as may be included in one of two groups: *a*) such as flow from failure to distinctly realize the historical occasion, objections which need not have arisen if our leading authorities, instead of leaving us with the bare statement that the ultimate source must be “some discourse of Jesus,” had proceeded to tell us, as with the means at their command they might have done, what discourse, and why, and when, and how; *b*) such as flow from misunderstanding of the character and connection of this discourse. These, in our judgment, might have been obviated if our critical authorities had not themselves been misled by an over-refinement of critical keenness.

Wendt, in spite of a strong inclination to derive this narrative (the temptation), just on account of its pregnant, figurative garb, from personal later communication by Jesus to his dis-

ciples,¹³ nevertheless has not included it in his restoration of the "Logia," although it certainly meets his very simple canon (discursive matter common to Matthew and Luke not found in Mark). His reason is that "in this work [the 'Logia'] only such sayings of Jesus and historical scenes would seem to have been described as the author himself had witnessed."¹⁴ But if he had reflected that the only possible time in which Jesus could have uttered such a discourse was toward the end of his ministry, after the question of his Messiahship, and the sense in which it should be understood, had been broached to the Twelve—this the pivotal question of the temptation, as Wendt himself recognizes—he would have found no difficulty in placing it in such a historical setting that the apostle Matthew could himself be an ear-witness. True, it does not now occupy such a position; neither is it in its present form a discourse. But that is only because, seeing it to be autobiographical, Mark naturally placed his reference to it at that point in his chronological account where the event would fall in the story of Jesus' life, rather than the time of narration; and Matthew¹⁵ and Luke, following suit, altered the discourse into narrative form and placed it in chronological order, just as we should expect them to do with autobiographic material.

If anything is to be reckoned an assured result of modern criticism, accepted by all our authorities, it is that Mark is right, as against certain disputed appearances of the other gospels, in representing the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi¹⁶ as the first unambiguous accepted recognition of Jesus as Messiah by others, or claim to the title and office on his own part. On any other supposition Jesus' solemn welcome of Peter's great intuition, as an inspiration from heaven not revealed to him by flesh and blood, his reciprocal recognition of Peter as the first "stone" of the great edifice yet to be reared, the "new temple" made without hands, his bestowal upon him as the "first confessor" of the symbol of the keys of the kingdom, and the power of "binding

¹³ *Lehre Jesu*, Vol. II, p. 71.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 210.

¹⁵ The evangelist, not the apostle, author of the "Logia."

¹⁶ Mark 8:27-33 = Matt. 16:13-23 = Luke 9:18-22.

and loosing" in the new community yet to be founded on the doctrine of his Messiahship, are incomprehensible. The solemn charge to the Twelve "that they should tell no man that he was the Christ" is incredible if there had been a previous communication of the fact to others. It had been, on the contrary, a secret locked in Jesus' own breast, till now in the strict privacy of remote Cæsarea Philippi he took the Twelve into his confidence and told them both who the Messiah is, and what the career that lies before him. It remained with this exception a secret, until Jesus, having made his preparations, announced to all Israel assembled at the Passover by one symbolic act both the fact and the character of his Messianic claims, fulfilling of set purpose the prophecy:

Zion, behold, thy King cometh unto thee ;
He is meek and lowly and bringeth salvation,
Riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.¹⁷

Not merely is the supposition of any intimation of Jesus' Messiahship prior to Peter's confession inconsistent with Jesus' own words, and with the talk of the people as reported to him by the Twelve ; it is incredible on purely historical grounds that Jesus should have cast such a firebrand among his inflammable Galilean hearers as to suggest by a single avoidable word his Messianic claims, until at least his preaching had served to thoroughly disabuse their minds of the current political conception. We may even say that if he had not observed this

¹⁷ The question whether or not Jesus could have used the title Son of Man prior to Cæsarea Philippi is of subordinate importance. If he did so, it was ambiguous (John 12 : 34 ; cf. Matt. 16 : 13), and, in spite of Dan. 7 : 13 ("a son of man") and the possible Messianic use in Enoch, could have meant no more to Jesus' hearers than an enigmatic functionary charged in some way with bringing in the kingdom of God. It is notorious that until the last Jesus' preaching of the kingdom is impersonal. The Johannine discourses are a problem by themselves. *Per contra*, the notion that Jesus did not himself arrive at the conviction that he personally was God's chosen Messiah until some time during the public ministry not merely relegates the whole story of the baptismal vision to the sphere of romance, but contradicts the authoritative "But I say unto you" of the Sermon on the Mount. Moreover, it attributes to Jesus a course of initial precipitancy and subsequent perplexity which would inevitably lead to vacillation and final despair, the very opposite qualities from those which really mark him out from the beginning : a steady, progressive, struggling, but ultimately victorious faith in his Messianic calling, as from God and destined to be vindicated by God, in the final outcome.

obvious precaution, the catastrophe which actually followed in less than a week after the publication of his claim would have been precipitated immediately. We can hardly emphasize too strongly the importance and the certainty of this datum of historical criticism: Jesus did not make himself known as the Messiah until his public ministry in Galilee had been brought to a forced conclusion.¹⁸

The inference from this critical datum as to the story of the temptation is unavoidable. If from Jesus at all — and who else could report the scenes of that desert solitude, scenes from the inner chambers of Jesus' own deepest experience? — its narration belongs to the closing weeks of the ministry, during or after the journey up to the last Passover. For the reiterated refrain of the tempter is this: "*If thou art the Son of God, do thus and so.*"

But it is not merely possible to fix with certainty a *terminus a quo* before which the story of the temptation *cannot* have been related. It is possible, by reasoning which, though in part *a priori*, may well seem almost equally conclusive, to determine the very occasion on which the autobiographic discourse was

¹⁸ Emphasis upon this fact is the more important because an eager desire to rescue at all hazards the historicity of the Johannine discourses has led otherwise excellent authorities to blink a part of its significance. One can hardly assume with Beyschlag *et al.* that Peter's confession was merely a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah *in a new sense*, beyond that of John 1:41 f., and still do justice to the historical situation. Even if with certain conservative authorities we should adopt the improbable view that Jesus' early ministry was largely occupied with efforts to repress a conviction that he was the Messiah, of course in the pre-Christian sense, to which the testimony of John, or of the events, had given rise, still the result is the same for our contention: Jesus could not have used language *encouraging* to this conviction before Cæsarea Philippi. There is, however, a single exception — but one which emphatically proves the rule. The enigmatical form of the question and answer in the incident of Luke 7:18–23 suggests that both John and Jesus were exchanging messages which the bystanders, the disciples, and even the bearers of the message, would not understand in a Messianic sense. *Per contra*, it would also appear that John the Baptist on this point was, to a certain extent, in the confidence of Jesus, though whether by impartation of John to Jesus, as maintained by Weiss and Beyschlag, or of Jesus to John, according to our contention, must be determined later. At any rate it is clear from both question and answer that Jesus' interpretation of his Messianic calling was a stumbling-block to John; for, though greatest of the prophets, he was less than the least in the kingdom.

uttered, and by this determination to remove coincidentally all that class of objections to the symbolic interpretation which rest upon the singularity of the utterance, whether in form or content.

It is indeed true, as must occur to us at once when this interpretation is proposed, that any narration of his personal experience would be a feature altogether unique in our record of the life of Jesus. His teaching is anything but egotistic. True, in the fourth gospel, and some exceptional passages in the synoptic tradition, he makes himself the subject of his discourse ; but never personally. Even in the fourth gospel it is always officially, by virtue of his Messianic office and claims, and as the Chosen of God that he sets himself before his hearers. Can we then imagine such a thing as an autobiographic discourse, a revelation of his own inner and private experience to the disciples ? Yes ; but on one occasion only, and under such circumstances only as made such a revelation of the sacred mysteries of his own inner consciousness a moral necessity. Even then the revelation will hardly have been in tangible, concrete form, but rather veiled in such symbolic imagery as befits the intimate sacredness of the subject, and such as the oriental teacher knows so well how to employ and his hearer to interpret. It may, perhaps, have been impersonal in form, as when Paul, driven to reveal the secrets of his inner life, writes of himself : " I know a man in Christ fourteen years ago caught up into paradise . . . on behalf of such an one will I glory, but on mine own behalf will I not glory." But when, if ever, *occurred* that unique occasion in the life of Jesus which could impel him by moral constraint to lay open to the Twelve the story of his Messianic consciousness, how he received it, how he defended it from assault ? We answer : At Cæsarea Philippi. For he who lays claim to the Messianic office must, in justice to his hearers, make known both on what ground he has come to believe himself called of God to this supremely exalted station, and also in what sense he understands his mission. This obligation Jesus neither could nor would avoid. Nothing was more indispensable to the Twelve than to obtain such an insight into

his Messianic consciousness in its origin and nature as he alone could give them. Nothing was more in harmony with his wishes than to satisfy this inevitable want from the moment it was felt, by a narrative of his Messianic call, and of how, in his own experience, he had met the objections which, with the first inkling of his exalted claims, would be suggested to their minds. But it is not likely that he would recur to this subject in his public teaching, or mention it again even in private after having once laid bare his secret to the Twelve. That is the answer to the objection that Jesus nowhere else speaks of his personal experience. On the unique occasion when he does speak of it he would be more apt to use the symbolism and imagery of exalted prophetic discourse, "to speak in riddles," as the disciples elsewhere term it,¹⁹ than to use the language of ordinary intercourse, or even of popular teaching. That is the answer to the objection that the form and imagery are unusual.²⁰

Just as surely as it was impossible for one whose conception of the Messiah was so exalted and so religious as that of Jesus assuredly was, to arrogate to himself this office apart from some experience so overpowering that he must needs take it as the call of God—and no one seems better able to make this clear than B. Weiss himself, who yet rejects the obvious inference as to the baptismal vision—just so surely is it impossible that such a one should ask others to believe him the Chosen of God, and not relate to them in the same breath how it had been divinely made known to him; as Paul, from the moment that he knows his apostleship to be impugned, immediately tells the story of his

¹⁹ John 16: 29.

²⁰ The form of the temptation story is by no means so unique as is commonly supposed. Jesus employs the same in speaking of the temptation of Simon and the Twelve: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath obtained leave to take you and sift you as wheat" (Luke 22: 31) is a bold adoption of the imagery of Job. "I beheld Satan as lightning fallen from heaven" (Luke 10: 18) is no more and no less worthy of literal interpretation than the symbolism of the temptation story. As for the rebuke to Peter: "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art a stumbling-block unto me, for thou mindest not the things that be of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16: 33), the reader will have already divined the special relation into which we bring it with the autobiographic discourse. These should suffice to prove that the symbolism of the temptation story is at least not inconceivable in the mouth of Jesus. As for that of the baptismal vision, see pp. 544 ff.

"call."²¹ This is our *a priori* ground for the conviction that the autobiographic discourse on which our accounts of both the baptism and temptation are founded was delivered at Cæsarea Philippi in the connection of Matt. 16:13-23.

But fortunately we are not without confirmation *a posteriori* in the phenomena of the text itself. Of the synoptic accounts Matthew's is by far the fullest, and yet seems to add nothing to that of Mark, or the still briefer story of Luke, which does not rightly belong in this connection. It is otherwise with the saying as to the requirement of unreserved loyalty on the part of every disciple (Mark 8:34-38 = Matt. 16:24-26 = Luke 9:23-26). There is an obvious break here, the saying being addressed to "the multitude, together with his disciples." The multitude, at Cæsarea Philippi! Matthew and Luke feel the incongruity and alter, the one to τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, the other to πρὸς πάντας. Moreover, both Matthew and Luke duplicate the sayings, manifestly from another source, in a different connection, and even the fourth gospel inserts it later (*cf.* Matt. 10:32 f., 39; Luke 12:8 f.; 17:33; John 12:25 f.). What, then, if, in place of this dislocated material, we insert our autobiographic discourse? What will be the context? Before it the strangely harsh answer to Peter's well-meant expostulation — quite too harsh in the absence of anything more to explain and soften — "*Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.*" After it the vivid contrast to the career of humiliation which the Son of Man takes as the true interpretation of his earthly Messianic calling: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."²²

²¹ Gal. 1:11, 12.

²² The form of Matt. 16:21-28 is most nearly original, needing only the removal of the portion corresponding to Mark 8:34, 35, duplicated in Matt. 10:39; John 8:38. Mark has again mingled in a saying which the parallels — Matt. 10:32 f. = Luke 12:8 f. — prove to belong elsewhere. Vs. 26, with its significant affinity with the third

Even the fourth gospel seems to have a further hint of confirmation. For this gospel also has its account of the revelation of the secret of the Messiahship. Only, since it belongs in the author's plan to bring forward Jesus as the Messiah from the very first (20:31), all this is related at the very outset, at the baptism of John, before the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Here, too, the story begins with the confession of Simon (coupled with that of Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael), and the bestowal of the symbolic name Peter, and ends, like the synoptic account, with the assurance that they, his hearers, shall witness the glorification of the Messiah. But is it pure fancy if we see a kind of reminiscence of the omitted story of the baptismal vision in the form of the promise here: "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"?²³ At the very least we get an instructive parallel for such symbolic utterances as this: "He saw heaven opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him."

But our restoration of the lost context of the autobiography is not quite complete. There is one belated fragment which we must restore to its own. For certain obvious reasons, such as we might naturally expect to affect a compiler uncertain as to the "order,"²⁴ Mark introduces, immediately after the saying about seeing the Son of Man in glory, the story of the transfiguration. Equally obvious, but still more superficial reasons would suggest the bringing of it in immediately before the question of the disciples: "How then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" Matthew and Luke as usual follow suit implicitly. But of all possible occasions when the disciples might have brought up this objection, what one more really improbable than immediately after they have seen Elias with their own eyes? And over and above this, what relevance has the objection, "Elias must *first* come"? Before what? Certainly not "before scenes of transfiguration take place," but "before Messias." But this is as much temptation ("gain the whole world"), will then follow directly upon it. It may have furnished the occasion for Mark's introducing before it the kindred but intrusive saying "to the multitude."

²³ John 1:35-51.

²⁴ Cf. the Papias fragment on Mark.

as to say that the subject of conversation is still the same as in 16:13-28 (= Mark 8:27-9:1 = Luke 9:18-27), before the intrusion of the new event, and that the latter is absolutely ignored. In other words, Jesus is still speaking of his Messianic call. The disciples, since Peter's false and worldly interpretation of the Messianic career has met such sharp rebuke, and since they have received an explanation of the true Messianic career *κατὰ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ*, have now but a single further question to ask, and this not as an objection, but as a difficulty to be explained: What, then, of the expected previous coming of Elias? How say the scribes that Elias must first come? How significantly does the answer of Jesus lead back to the unwelcome prediction that had shocked the hope of Peter: "Elijah indeed cometh and restoreth all things (Mal. 4:5, 6); but I say unto you that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. *Even so shall the Son of Man also suffer of them.* Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."²⁵

We have here in truth the very passage needed to make the setting of the autobiographic discourse complete. The story of Matt. 16:13—17:13 should be read consecutively, omitting only 16:24 f. and 17:1-9, and inserting in place of the former the story, related in Jesus' own words, of his Messianic call. In its own context this autobiography of Jesus will seem neither strange in subject nor incongruous in form.

Having then found reason to reject the two views of the temptation which stand at the opposite poles of interpretation, and having refuted some objections against the view that the temptation story is an autobiographic discourse of Jesus, we have next to consider a second and more comprehensive problem: Granting that in the privacy of Cæsarea Philippi Jesus may have given to the Twelve an insight into his own feeling as to true and false Messianic ideals, what have we that remains of that discourse, and what information does it convey as to the origin and nature of his Messianic consciousness? Its absolutely paramount

²⁵ Matt. 17:10-13. The sayings (Matt. 11:10, 14; Luke 7:24) cannot, of course, *precede* this. Were they uttered on the same occasion?

importance, if such a discourse can be discovered and interpreted, there will be none to dispute. We appealed but now to the improbability *a priori* that Jesus should have withheld from his intimates on such an occasion as Cæsarea Philippi an account, shorter or longer, plainer or more enigmatic, of the Messianic call and his interpretation of it. If the disciples had, as we have claimed, the *right* to expect this of him, we, their followers, have a still more obvious claim on them to transmit intact this vital "mystery of the kingdom." Have they done so? And, if so, why this question as to the whereabouts of the story?

It should scarcely be needful to remind the reader that a generation later than Paul and John and Mark something else had come in to take the place of the Messianic call as the "beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Christ the Son of God;" a story of his birth which, whether historically trustworthy or not, was certainly not heard from the lips of Jesus; for so far from resting his Messianic claims on questions of birth or pedigree, whether Davidic or plebeian, miraculous or commonplace, he has lifted himself to a totally different level by his question to the scribes: "The Christ, whose Son is he?"²⁶ But since the time when the idyllic birth-scenes of our first and third gospels first captivated the mind of the church, these have ever tended with well-nigh irresistible power to distract from what in the earlier time, and even, we may be sure, in the thought of the first and third evangelists themselves, was the real beginning of the Messiahship. For surely it is not the purpose of these chapters, these gospels before the gospels, to describe a part of Jesus' *conscious* Messianic career, but only to oppose to the Adoptianism of the latter part of the first century the true doctrine that Jesus did not *become* the Son of God, full of the Holy Ghost, at his baptism; but was really so (although unconsciously) from the beginning.²⁷

²⁶ Matt. 22 : 41-45.

²⁷ The fourth gospel meets the same heresy in a profounder way by appeal to the Pauline (not to say orthodox Jewish) doctrine of preëxistence. The purpose both of the infancy chapters of Matthew and Luke and the prologue of John is to meet these germs of a Cerinthian Gnostic theory. Docetic Gnosticism of this type laid hold of the striking contrast between the absolute obscurity of the life of Jesus before his baptism, and the sudden blaze of glory thereafter, as a convenient point of attachment for

Therefore let us not lay the blame on our evangelists, least of all on Mark, the earliest and simplest, if this key to the mind of Christ seems to us not to have been hung plainly enough before our eyes. What constituted "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God," in the oldest of our gospels, is not doubtful. It was the story of the baptismal vision and the temptation in the wilderness.

But was the story of the baptismal vision then a part of the autobiographic discourse? We have no hesitation whatever in affirming, despite the arguments of Weiss and Beyschlag combined, that this story was from the beginning, and must ever from the nature of the case have been, inseparable from that of the temptations. Great as is our debt to these scholars and critics, in attempting, as they do, to derive the story of the baptismal vision from intimations of John the Baptist, while they carry back the story of the temptation to Jesus as its ultimate source, they certainly introduce a great and needless confusion.

One may be pardoned for the suspicion that an eagerness to defend the historicity of the fourth gospel has sometimes obscured critical insight. How irresistible is the impression of an actual experience of Jesus, as we read the eloquent description of Beyschlag: "In the moment of baptism the consciousness of his Messianic calling was awakened by a meeting and

its teaching of the descent of the spiritual æon Christ upon the fleshly man Jesus, on occasion of his baptism, retiring from him again at his passion, or shortly before. The apostle John we know to have antagonized Cerinthus. The difference between the mode of denial adopted by the Jewish Christian narratives of Matthew and Luke (*i. e.*, of course, the Palestinian — not Judaistic — *sources* employed by our first and third evangelists) and the mode of the fourth gospel, is the difference between the Jewish and the Hellenistic (or Alexandrian) mode of reasoning; the former tells a story, the latter philosophizes. It is well for the church that it has both these forms of protest put forth — one in Ephesus, the other two in Palestine — by Christians of the first century, against making the baptismal vision the actual beginning of the indwelling of God in man. The primitive church well knew that the story was never meant by its author to bear any such sense of spiritual transfusion. It would be still better if the church would now refrain from the other extreme, and cease to empty the story of the baptismal vision and temptation of the sense which rightly belongs to it, implanted in it, as we are aiming to demonstrate, by Jesus himself. In its true sense, it is the occasion when Jesus became *consciously* the Son of God, and in the ensuing conflict of soul reached his own determination of the meaning and the truth of the revelation.

contact of his inmost being with the heavenly Father, and burst into existence: then with the feeling of an incomparable vocation, as with Saul when he became king, as with Luther when he came to know himself as the reformer chosen of God, powers and gifts till now unsuspected, such as the god-sent calling demanded for its carrying through, were naturally aroused within him.”²⁸ Surely this means the baptismal vision of Jesus! This is—to use the figure applied but a line or two before—the opening under the sunbeam from heaven of the bud of Jesus’ pure nature, as yet unconscious of its own perfection, into the blossom of a self-realizing Messianic consciousness. The author himself seems to be conscious that he is dealing here with the inmost experience of Jesus’ soul. He seems to see him as he stands consecrating himself in the waters of that baptism which was to set apart a new and purer Israel than that which in the waters of the Red Sea had been “baptized unto Moses,” till, coming up out of the water, “straightway he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.”²⁹ But no, says Beyschlag; this is not the experience of Jesus, which appears thus sublimely pictured in the oldest of our gospels. *This is the experience of John the Baptist!* We are not, indeed, with Weiss, to conceive of the Messianic consciousness as originating earlier, or, indeed, at any other time than exactly this moment; but, inasmuch as the fourth gospel represents John the Baptist as the recipient of this vision, and as, furthermore, the vision is a phenomenon strange to the character of Jesus, and unlike the form of his communion with the Father, we must stand by Weiss in his precarious effort to find in the later version of Matthew traces of the synoptic account in harmony with John 1:32–34. But oh, how slender the thread of argument! Let us have it in full: “The representation of the oldest source is no longer absolutely pure in our first gospel, for it is shown by the comparison of parallel texts that the first half of vs. 16 is introduced from Mark. By this means the

²⁸ BEYSCHLAG, *Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, pp. 223–4.

²⁹ Mark 1:10, 11. As to the aorist εὐδόκησα see pp. 530–31, note 8.

recipient of the vision is changed, although the vision itself still speaks of Jesus ; but the voice from heaven in vs. 17 shows distinctly that in the original representation mention was made of a vision, not to Him, but to John. In it the consummation of the baptism was in the words : Then he suffered Him, *i. e.*, to be baptized (3:15), so that there followed immediately the vision which on the same occasion was granted to John."³⁰

The very utmost that could result from Weiss' argument for the removal of vs. 16*a*, even if granted, would be a possible ambiguity of the *ܐܢܬܗ* (16*b* omitted, be it observed, by some of the best authorities), so that no more could be inferred from it than that some person ignorant of the facts might be led by it to falsely infer that in the representation of the "oldest source" John was the recipient of the vision. That the "original representation" may have labored under the disadvantage of this lack of definiteness in the personal pronoun, and so have given rise to the error of John 1:32-34, we are quite prepared to admit, if necessary.³¹ More Weiss' argument does not prove, even if granted. But on what ground does it rest? Absolutely its only support is the change of the *bath qol* (the "voice from heaven") of Mark from the interpellative to the demonstrative form. The *οὗτός ἐστιν* for *σὺ εἶ* must bear the whole weight of the inference. But what compels us to suppose that the voice from heaven is then addressed to John? Why may we not suppose that the evangelist conceives the story externally, as Luke does, and regards the heavenly voice as addressed to the bystanders, as in the transfiguration story? Why may we not suppose, still more readily, that the first evangelist is here pursuing the course so habitual with him of making Mark's scriptural quotations agree more exactly with the original, adopting the demonstrative form of the passage on which it certainly is based, *viz.*, Isa. 42:1-4 (quoted in Matt. 12:18-21), under the further influence, we will say, of the *bath qol* in the transfiguration story?

³⁰ B. WEISS, *Life of Christ*, Transl., T. & T. Clark, Vol. I, p. 324, note.

³¹ Such ambiguity of the personal pronoun is characteristic of Aramaic, but that the author of the (Aramaic) original source had different persons in mind as subjects in 15*b* and 16*b* is shown by 4:1, where the Spirit (the same which descends in 3:16) leads Jesus — not John — into the wilderness.

There is certainly more than one explanation of the *οὗτός ἐστιν* more probable than the supposition that Mark and Luke are wrong, and John the Baptist was the recipient of the vision.

Whatever our explanation of John 1:33 f., it is a psychological impossibility to suppose the vision in the mind of one man and both its antecedents and consequences in the mind of another. John was a prophet, and doubtless may have had visions, though, aside from the vision in question, we know of no more in his case than in his great disciple's. But we may safely say that if John the Baptist had visions of the "greater one who cometh, winnowing-fan in hand, to purge his floor, baptizing not with water but with fire,"³² their elements were hardly of this type, the opening skies, the brooding dove, the voice of loving fatherhood filling out with a divine fullness of new meaning the words of Messianic prediction :

Behold my servant whom I have chosen ;
 My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased.
 I will put my Spirit upon him,
 And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.
 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud ;
 Neither shall anyone hear his voice in the streets.
 A bruised reed shall he not break,
 And smoking flax shall he not quench,
 Till he send forth judgment unto victory.
 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.³³

In spite of John 1:29, it was not John the Baptist who resorted to the second Isaiah and the image of the suffering Servant of Jehovah for his favorite type of Messiah's career, but rather one who so defined his calling from the time when he stood up to read in the synagogue at Nazareth³⁴ and who drew

³² The introduction of "the Holy Ghost," a baptism of still larger grace than the present, into John's representation of the Messiah coming to judgment, seems to give a more Christian coloring to his preaching than seems really probable. Read Luke 3:7-9, 16 f., omitting in vs. 16 the words "the Holy Ghost and," and observe the improved connection, the baptism of repentance *vs.* the baptism of judgment. According to Acts 1:5 it is Jesus who thus distinguishes Christian from Johannine baptism, and we agree with this author. Nevertheless, the point is not vital.

³³ Isa. 42:1-4, as quoted in Matt. 12:18-21.

³⁴ Luke 4:16-22, using Isa. 61:1 f.

closer and closer to the thought of the Great Exile as Calvary drew nearer and more inevitable.

Not merely are the antecedents of the vision present in the mind of Jesus and absent from that of John the Baptist; the consequences point as conspicuously to the same result. It is Jesus, not John, who is overwhelmed at the revelation and "irresistibly impelled" toward the solitude where his conflict of soul may be fought out without distraction.³⁵ It is Jesus who, the conflict once decided and the heavenly voice accepted as in truth a revelation from God, stands thereafter in a faith which not even the agony of Gethsemane nor the breaking heart of Calvary can shake, the faith that God will vindicate and give the victory even through death to his Son and Messiah. It is John who is "stumbled in him" and who doubts whether, after all, Israel must not "look for another" redeemer.

True, we admit a confidential relation between the two as possible, or even probable. If the vision had been John's, he would not have kept it from Jesus, and Jesus could not have received such a communication from his revered teacher and "prophet" unperturbed. But could he rest *such* a faith on anything less than a divine revelation? Could Jesus believe that God would deliver his Messianic call at second hand, through vision vouchsafed to another? John, on the other hand, had he really been the recipient of the vision, must have not only been permanently convinced of its certainty, but must have understood its content, in which case his later stumbling is inconceivable.

But since the point is so vital, we cannot rest satisfied with arguments drawn from the psychological necessities of the case, but must briefly indicate how both the historical and literary unities corroborate our view.

Historically we are reduced to the same confusion by supposing the story of the baptismal vision to have emanated from John the Baptist, as when we suppose the temptation story, or any of those sayings which distinctly declare Jesus to be the Messiah,

³⁵ Mark 1:12 τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει. Matthew mitigates the strong expression to ἀνέχθη; Luke ὑπέστρεψεν.

to have preceded Cæsarea Philippi. Of the baptismal vision, at any rate, it is impossible to say that it does not present Jesus as "the Christ the Son of the living God" in *the fullest and highest sense* claimed for Peter's confession. Is it possible, then, to assume as historical the representation that John the Baptist related to various individuals, including directly and indirectly Andrew, John, *and Peter*, this account of the divine calling of Jesus, specially revealed to him from heaven; and at the same time to hold that Jesus, at least a year afterward, on the ground of an identical declaration by Peter, commended his superhuman insight in the solemn pronouncement: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven"?—But it is needless to repeat our historical argument against the possibility of placing the temptation discourse earlier than Cæsarea Philippi. What applies to that applies with tenfold force to the story of the Messianic call. It is impossible that this secret should have been breathed by human lips, until Jesus himself revealed it to the Twelve on that momentous occasion. The one exception is that which doubtless gave rise to the representation of the fourth gospel, certainly unhistorical in its present form, though just as certainly a genuine Johannine tradition: Jesus himself, perhaps, made known to John, after he had returned from the wilderness, what he afterward made known to the Twelve; but John, whatever mysterious and enigmatic words he may afterward have spoken concerning Jesus, most certainly respected his secret.

We have one further argument by which to prove that Jesus, and not John, is the ultimate source of the story of the baptismal vision. It is that from literary relation, and it must serve at the same time both to set forth our interpretation of the autobiographic discourse as a whole, and to refute the one objection yet unanswered, viz.: that vision is not characteristic of Jesus, nor appropriate to his type of mind, so far as we know it.

Beyschlag has very properly and forcefully criticised the interpretation B. Weiss had given in his *Leben Jesu* of the temptations, as destroying their coherence and the inner unity of the subject. But this is but a mote as compared with the beam which

blinds the eye of him who cannot see the inner unity and necessary coherence of all three temptations with the baptismal vision. It is doing violence, no doubt, to cut the thread of connection which binds together the three temptations as so many false ideals of Messiah, Christs *κατὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, and makes them mere fortuitous evil suggestions.³⁶ But it is surely no less violent to cut the thread of thought-connection between the story of the baptismal visions and that of the temptations by deriving one from an utterance of the Baptist and the other from a late discourse of Jesus.

Our historical argument, if granted, would make it plain that the occasion when the story of the baptismal vision was related cannot be earlier than the great one at Cæsarea Philippi. It would thus be brought objectively to take its place side by side with its present companion-piece. But our opponents would separate them widely. Let us ask then subjectively: How would the temptations, with their recurrent "If thou art the Son of God," be intelligible in the absence of the shortly preceding revelation from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, upon thee my choice hath fallen"?³⁷

Both internal and external evidence demands the inclusion, as part of the original content of the autobiographic discourse, of the whole account of Jesus' relations with the Baptist up to the time when, after his return from the wilderness, he comes into his earliest relations with any of the Twelve in the tradition of the fourth gospel. How, then, are we to understand the events of this vital period of his history, related, it would seem, by none other than Jesus himself?

We are told that "this view [Jesus as the recipient of the vision] . . . introduces into the life of Jesus visionary situations which were found even by Keim not to correspond with the calm, clear quality of his spiritual life."³⁸ We answer: They who urge this objection mistake the question in debate. The question is not, Did Jesus ever *have* such visionary experiences?

³⁶ So BEYSCHLAG, *Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, p. 227, note 2, against B. Weiss.

³⁷ For this translation of the aorist *εὐδόκησα* see note 8, on pp. 530-31, and *cf.* Isa. 42:1.

³⁸ B. WEISS, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, p. 328, note.

but, Did Jesus ever refer to his subjective experiences *in the language of vision*? This is quite a different matter. To the latter question there can be but one answer: This method, so familiar in his day, so preëminently the favorite method since the great prophets had made it a literary figure, for the representation of subjective experiences, was not strange either to Jesus or his disciples. The mere fact that Jesus related the experience of his Messianic call and the subsequent struggle of his soul under the forms of vision proves nothing whatever as to the psychological fact. We can no more infer from the saying, "He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him," that Jesus had an actual vision of this character, than we can from his saying, "I saw Satan as lightning fallen from heaven," that he had that kind of vision. It does not follow from his using the stereotyped form of the *bath qol* ("voice from heaven"), so perfectly familiar and intelligible to his first auditors, that the divine revelation of his Messiahship came to him in abnormal condition of mind, any more than from his saying to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," it follows that Peter had heard the words in a trance. If Jesus related the story of his Messianic call in this form, as we suppose, what is implied by it, and *all* that is implied by it, is simply that it came to him "by revelation of God," and not from "flesh and blood," nor from the mere unaided reasonings of his own soul. That one essential fact is given; no more. It is the claim of a divine origin and not a human one for the foundation of his teaching. It is implied in his answer to a demand for his authority, wherein he coördinates his preaching with that of John as "from heaven."³⁹ It is the explanation of his teaching "with authority," and the prototype of Paul's similar vindication of his "gospel" that it is not *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*.⁴⁰ As to the fact of "revelation" there is ample assurance; as to the mode there is something of reserve.

Are we then to understand that there was no baptismal vision at all in the case either of John or Jesus? That we are far from

³⁹ Mark 11: 29 f.

⁴⁰ Gal. 1: 11.

asserting. On the contrary, there certainly was a condition of supreme spiritual and mental exaltation. There *may* have been a corresponding physical reaction resulting in "vision." Indications of the narrative itself⁴¹ confirm our natural inference that this conviction of his personal Messianic call when it finally burst upon Jesus must have shaken his nature to its very foundation. If there was any vice which would be to him by nature, by training, and by personal religious feeling peculiarly abhorrent, it would be the pharisaic vice of self-exaltation, the putting of oneself forward as more righteous, better informed, better qualified to judge and to lead than others. To Paul the characteristics which preëminently distinguish Christ are his "meekness and gentleness."⁴² To humble oneself, to be meek and quiet, to be inconspicuous, not to strive and cry aloud and cause one's voice to be heard in the streets, but to show such gentleness as not even to break the bruised reed—these are the qualities which, to the natural temperament of Jesus and of the circle of "the meek and quiet in the land" in which he moved, constitute the true beauty of holiness. Nothing can be more significant than to see how completely this temperament pervades the epistle of "James the Lord's brother," with its abhorrence of the noisy, talkative, pretentious would-be teacher and judge of others. It must have been something little short of a mental and spiritual cataclysm when the conviction was borne in with divine power upon the soul of such as this Man of Nazareth that the Chosen of God, the Messiah of Israel, was none other than himself.

Of one other great and noble, yet truly humble soul of antiquity we have the record of a similar experience, as told also, originally, by himself. To Socrates the message of the Delphic oracle was no light matter, though sometimes he seems to treat it half-humorously. But when he accepts it, it is by "humbling himself." He knows his own ignorance—that is

⁴¹ Mark 1:12. Those who have had experience of the physical shock of immersion, when, "coming up out of the water," the light of day again breaks upon the eye, will not merely appreciate the favorite allusion of Paul to baptism as a burial and resurrection, but may even find here a contributory straw of physical influence tending to increase the state of exaltation of the mind.

⁴² 2 Cor. 10:1.

his "wisdom." The comparison is not adequate, and yet, it may help us to conceive how Jesus might feel toward a message he could not refuse, yet one which placed him upon such a pinnacle of supreme exaltation. It marks the very acme of his self-abnegation that, once thoroughly convinced that this call was indeed from God, he "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, yea even the death of the cross." We may be sure, then, that it was not without a mental, possibly even a physical, convulsion that this revolution in life was wrought. Others, had they been able to realize the depth and purity of his religious life, his penetration into the very heart of prophets and psalmists, his clear perception of the fatal flaws of the various unworthy ideals about him; had they known his penetration to the true nature of the ills of humanity and their divine cure, his apprehension of the essential nature of God as the giver, the Father whose purpose is always and only holy, beneficent love—others, had they been aware of this, might not have found it so strange a thought, despite all the conventional, external notions of the Messianic kingdom, that this quiet, unpretentious, noble Man of Nazareth should be the Chosen of God. But to him it was surprising, incredible, until in profoundest struggle of mind and soul he had become convinced of it, accepted it, submitted to it, as the call of God. In many natures such experiences take the form of vision. In the case of Paul it certainly was so, not once, but repeatedly. With men of this type, the mental data are present in the mind, premises and conclusion are steadily moving toward the point where, with the instantaneousness and precision of a calculating machine, they will suddenly fall into logical sequence and the result will be declared. Yet, meantime, the man himself is all unconscious of it. He may even be resisting it in mute struggle against the pricking goad, yet not so as to be consciously doing violence to conscience; till the decisive moment comes, the unstable equilibrium is destroyed, and in a soul- and body-shaking cataclysm the man becomes a new creature. Such, doubtless, was the temperament of Paul. But was it so with Jesus? We do not think it. There was, beyond question, the

same slow formation of the ideal, the gradual development on the one hand of the conception of the true kingdom of God and the true Messiah, on the other of the conception of his own personal career, culminating upon his association with John in a complete self-consecration in baptism to the cause of the kingdom. There was the gradual, unconscious approach of two converging lines of thought; there was the sudden, overwhelming result in the moment of coincidence, the instantaneous recognition that the two portraits—the Messiah of God and his own developed personality—are one and the same. Here, as in Paul's case, there was the same unknown quantity, the third and greatest element of the problem, the movement of that unseen power of which the tangible and earthly is but the shadow. But the experience of Jesus was not like Paul's. Aside from questions of temperament and psychological probability the story itself has indications of an idealizing touch. It is not the mere photograph of a single scene in Jesus' life, it is a portrait sketched with masterly hand by the artist himself.

Why have we in the half-dozen words of the "voice from heaven," as Jesus relates it, a complete picture of the Messianic son and servant of Isa. 42: 1-4? Is it because on the particular occasion when the call of God came to him it came to him in these identical words, the sharp-cut, clearly defined experience of a vision? Certainly not; but we have conveyed to us the exact idea—even better than by photographic reproduction from memory—of the great truth that then broke so overwhelmingly on Jesus' soul. And the words? They sketch for us, in the single stroke of the most incomparable word-artist who ever lived, the thought of Messiahhood—his Messiahhood now—as it had come to be in the soul of Jesus through many a silent year of preparation. The portrait is not that which the gospel according to the Hebrews attempts to substitute for this, the Messiahhood of the second psalm. It is the Messiahhood of Isa. 42: 1-4. And therewith we have Jesus' ideal of "the beloved,"⁴³ his unconscious portrait of himself.

Such, then, was the story of his Messianic call as related by

⁴³ Cf. with this *σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός*, the words of Eph. 1: 6.

Jesus to the Twelve at Cæsarea Philippi. We will not say that the experience was not more like vision than even the most intuitive thought, when in a moment the full consciousness of it had flashed upon him. We can only repeat, "it was from heaven and not of men;" but as to the exact form, or words, of that inscrutable experience, we have no right to press the language of the Master's report. We have no right to insist that his portraiture shall be other than ideal, as the form and language employed would seem to imply that it was.

But the Twelve had need of more at Cæsarea Philippi than merely to be told of his "high calling of God." They had just shown, through their spokesman Peter, a most deplorable disposition to conceive the Messiahship *κατὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*. He must go a step farther in his own experience and tell them how, in his own mind, he had met and overcome these unworthy ideals of Messiahship, and thus silence them once for all. For these conceptions of Messiah *κατὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*—Jesus did not now meet them for the first time. It was not a new objection to him when they cried out to him in the synagogue at Capernaum: "What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee? what workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat."⁴⁴ It was not a novel experience to him when "the Pharisees came forth, tempting him, seeking of him a sign from heaven."⁴⁵ From the very moment when the idea of himself as the Messiah *κατὰ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ* came into his mind, it would of necessity have to do battle with the current, stereotyped ideas, the Messiahs *τὰ κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, which must inevitably take to themselves these very forms.

Granted that the current expectations of Messiah's career were more or less incongruous with the spiritual ideal which had been slowly ripening in the mind of Jesus, are we to suppose that he could now instantaneously throw off all the conceptions of his childhood and youth, the beliefs of his nation and of his most revered teachers, without a struggle? So long as he was not personally confronting the question in practical earnest,

⁴⁴ John 6 : 30 f.

⁴⁵ Mark 8 : 11.

What is Messiah to do? the two ideals could coexist in his mind without sense of incongruity. But the moment the Messianic programme is laid upon his shoulders, the question presses instantly and clamorously for solution. "Messiah will outdo the great miracle of Moses, he will spread a feast for Israel in the wilderness." That is one of the most universally present of the current Messianic conceptions to be found in the New Testament. It is the "feast of the great king," at which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sit down, not without a multitude, says Jesus, from east and west and north and south. It is the "marriage supper" at which the nuptials of Messiah and his bride are celebrated. Crudely and materially by some, symbolically by others, the thought had been dwelt upon and embellished for generations. It pervades all the thought of the day. Even the chief viand of the feast was prescribed; Messiah should feed Israel upon the flesh of leviathan,⁴⁶ and "blessed should he be who should eat bread in the kingdom of God."⁴⁷ Nay, it is imbedded even in the most beautiful of all the psalms. Israel's Good Shepherd, after he has led them through the valley of the shadow of death (the woes of Messiah), "prepares a table before them in the presence of their (defeated) enemies, he anoints their head with (festal) oil, their cup runneth over." What then of this high and sacred expectation? Are the poor still to go hungry as before, and God's Messiah to be helpless to provide for them? "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones of the wilderness⁴⁸ to become bread." Thus the tempter, seeking to silence the divine voice: "*Thou* art my Son, my Chosen." But the answer is ready. He has, indeed, no power to turn the stones of the wilderness into bread; yet Israel's hope of a Messianic feast is not to be destroyed, but fulfilled. Only the famine it behooves the Son of God to assuage is "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."⁴⁹ "Blessed are they that hunger and

⁴⁶ See references in WEBER, *Lehren des Talmud*, p. 384.

⁴⁷ Luke 14:15.

⁴⁸ Luke's "this stone," of course, misses the point entirely. Realistic as usual, he conceives Jesus' own hunger as the motive.

⁴⁹ Am. 8:11.

thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This is the feast God gives his Messiah to spread before Israel; "for it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."⁵⁰ "Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. . . . The flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."⁵¹ This Messianic expectation, therefore, is to have its fulfillment; only it must be in the higher, diviner sense.

But how, then, of Israel's favorite dream of her Messianic deliverer, upborne on angels' wings invulnerable, while from the temple mount he heads the hosts of God and turns to flight the armies of aliens? It is written of Messiah: "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."⁵² What folly to entertain dreams of Messiahship, when the first determined stroke of opposition must lay thee low! Messiah, when he cometh, will stand on the highest battlement of the temple, before all Israel assembled in its courts. Surrounded by the cohorts of heaven, he will plunge unharmed into the depths below, striking terror to the hearts of his enemies. Thus again the tempter, taunting him with his weakness: Art thou, defenseless one, the Son of God? Again the answer is ready: It is not for man to tempt God as Israel tempted him in the wilderness, demanding a sign of his presence and support before they would venture on him, and saying, "Is Jehovah with us or not?"⁵³ Man's place is to follow the path of duty, be it even to defeat and death, and let God supply such protection and support as to him shall seem needful. Yet let no doubting heart suppose the promise of angelic support is vain; for in the hour of direst extremity the Son hath but to "beseech his Father, and he shall even then send him more than twelve legions of angels."⁵⁴ Once more faith in the divine calling and

⁵⁰ Matt. 4:4, quoting Deut. 8:3.

⁵² Matt. 4:6, quoting Ps. 91:11 f.

⁵¹ John 6:49 f., 63.

⁵⁴ Matt. 26:53.

⁵³ Matt. 4:7, quoting Deut. 6:16; cf. Ex. 17:7.

divine support triumphs over the protest of human weakness. "It is an evil and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign. There shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonah; for even as Jonah — unattended by aught of miraculous authentication, and simply calling to repentance under threat of impending doom — was himself a sign to the Ninevites, even so shall the Son of Man be to this generation."⁵⁵

But the real and most formidable objection is yet to come. Objections based on inadequate fulfillment of current Messianic expectations may possibly be removed by a spiritualizing interpretation of the prophecies on which they rest. But if the Man of Nazareth takes this voice in his heart as in truth the call of God, he must go out to face present realities both stern and hard. It is idle to offer to a people groaning under an oppressive foreign yoke, a mere moral kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It surely will not be in their eyes a fulfillment of the divine promise of deliverance in which they have been nurtured for generations. Nor is their political expectation a mere unwarranted misinterpretation of prophecy which he must rectify if he is determined to enter such a Messianic career as opens here before him. Far from it. His antagonists are in a measure the prophets and psalmists themselves; nay, even John the Baptist, whom he reveres above any prophet. Here and there in the prophets he may find intimations, such as those he loves to dwell on in the second Isaiah, of a peaceful conquest of the world by the divine power of truth and goodness; but these are neither supported by experience, nor can it honestly be said that they represent the consensus of prophecy. On the contrary, dreams of conquest, as in the second psalm, a world-wide dominion of the throne of David, deliverance for the people of Jehovah, and everlasting, righteous dominion for their king — these form the burden of prophecy. Since the day of the Great Exile himself the "watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem had never held their peace day nor night: they that were the Lord's remembrancers had taken no rest and given him no rest till he should establish and till he should make Jerusalem a

⁵⁵ Luke 11:29 f.

praise in the earth. The Lord had sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength: Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and strangers shall not drink thy wine for which thou hast labored; but they that have garnered it shall eat it and praise the Lord; and they that have gathered it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary."⁵⁶ Will a man venture to say after that that Israel's expectation of political deliverance was not justified? Had they no right to expect that Messiah should sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem and "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" be poured out at his feet? Could one thus easily bid them give up the hope of the New Jerusalem, in whose light the nations shall walk, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it; whose gates shall in no wise be shut by day, because they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it?⁵⁷ Would Jesus give the lie to Israel's noblest and best, to such as Simeon, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and Zacharias the father of John? Would he silence that song of the "horn of salvation from the house of God's servant David as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began,

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
To shew mercy towards our fathers,⁵⁸
And to remember his holy covenant;
The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father,
To grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies
Should serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him all our days"?⁵⁹

The teacher from Nazareth may undertake to set aside all this, but if so, it is as one who sets at defiance the judgment of the whole people of God—nay, who trifles with the hope of Israel, by offering them a Messiah shorn of all the glories of the Son of David, as destitute of "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" as his own Galilean home. That is the last and great temptation. Must not he who would be God's Messiah to Israel fulfill the promise "which he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets," which have been since the world

⁵⁶ Isa. 62: 6-9.

⁵⁷ Rev. 21: 24-26.

⁵⁸ *I. e.*, in the person of their children.

⁵⁹ Luke 1: 67-75.

began, the oath which he swore by his right hand, to grant them deliverance from their enemies, and dominion over the earth? But tremendous as is the force of the temptation, the faith of the Man of Nazareth is stronger. The very strength of the demand betrays its origin. This is not the kingdom of God that Israel craves—no, not though they claim it in the name of all the prophets since the world began and by the very oath of God. This is the kingdom of Satan, the prince of this world, lusting after the “kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them.” “They lust and have not; they kill and covet and cannot obtain; they fight and war; they have not, because they ask not. They ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that they may spend it on their pleasures.”⁶⁰ Begone, Satan, thou hast betrayed thyself. Make to others than this Son of God the tempting offer of “thy kingdom.” As for him, he will humble himself and become obedient unto death—yea, even the death of the cross, that God in due time may exalt him.

Such is the autobiography of Jesus. It is but a sketch taken at the critical moment of his career, drawn with his own masterly penury of words; but it gives a glimpse in retrospect, and in prospect. Behind is the growing time of youth, with its ideals for the kingdom of God and for his own career. Before is the career he must follow as the Called and Chosen of God. He can foresee but in outline what it must be. One thing alone is clear; it must be “not after the things of men, but after the things of God.” His power, his wisdom, his knowledge must depend absolutely upon God. He “can do nothing of himself,” but for him who by absolute faith puts himself “with God, all things are possible.”

Again I say, we have not here a photograph, we cannot lay stress upon each several word, and say, just such and such were the very thoughts that came to the mind of Jesus, when in the mighty impulse of the Spirit he was “driven forth” into the wilderness. It is a portrait, the portrait of a master who puts volumes of meaning into a single stroke. Do we value it too highly in making it our very key to the mind of Christ?

⁶⁰Jas. 4:1-3.